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AUTHORITY
IN A MAD MELEE WITH
THUNDER STRIKE
DIRECT EDITION

WENDELL VAUGHN. . . THE FIRST EARTH MAN EVER APPOINTED PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE. BONDED TO THE ENERGY-TRANSFORMING QUANTUM-BANDS THAT ARE BOTH WEAPONS AND SYMBOLS OF HIS STATION, HE FIGHTS AN ONGOING BATTLE TO DEFEND ALL LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE FROM COSMIC EVIL!

Stan Lee presents

QUASAR

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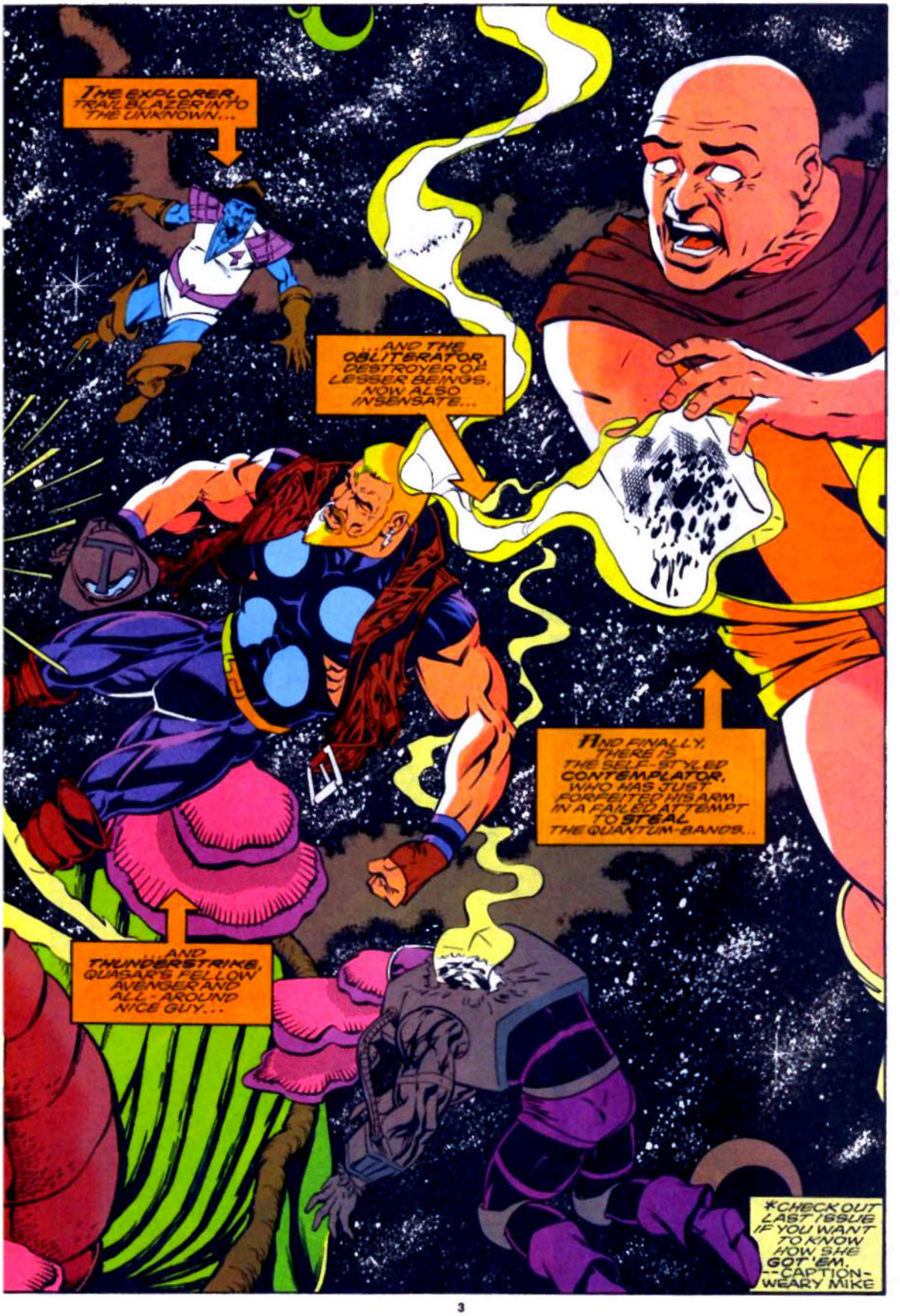
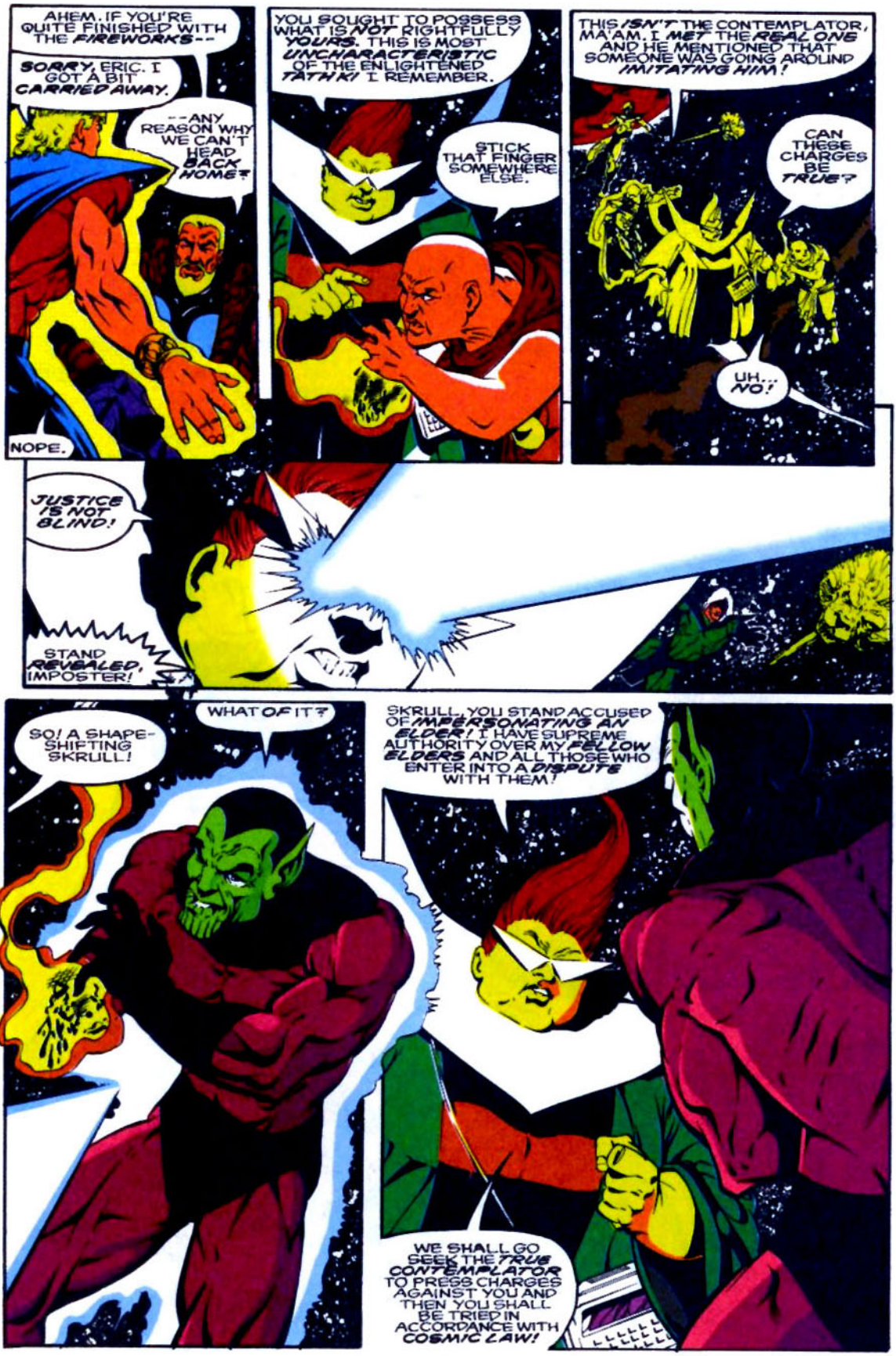
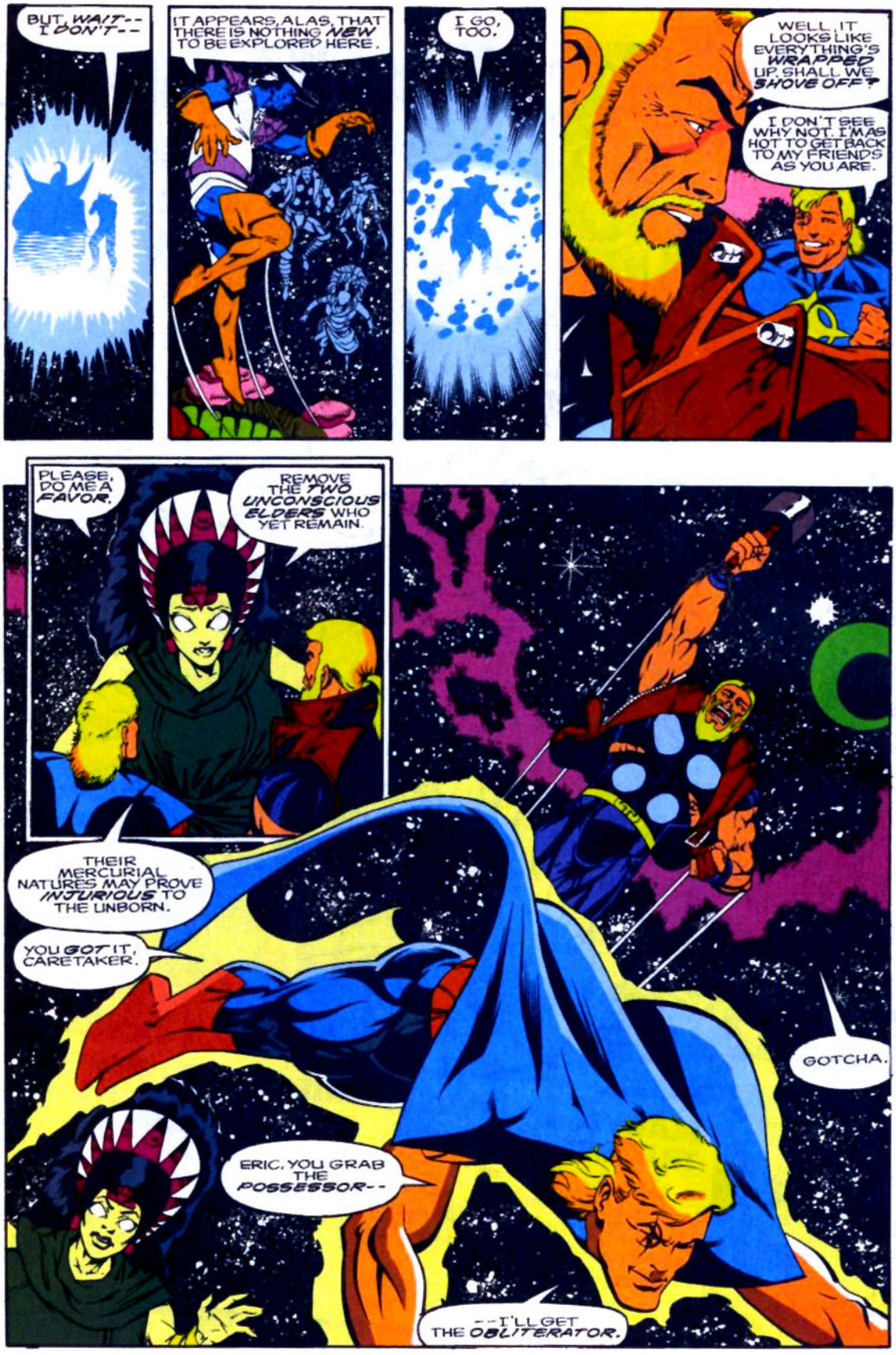
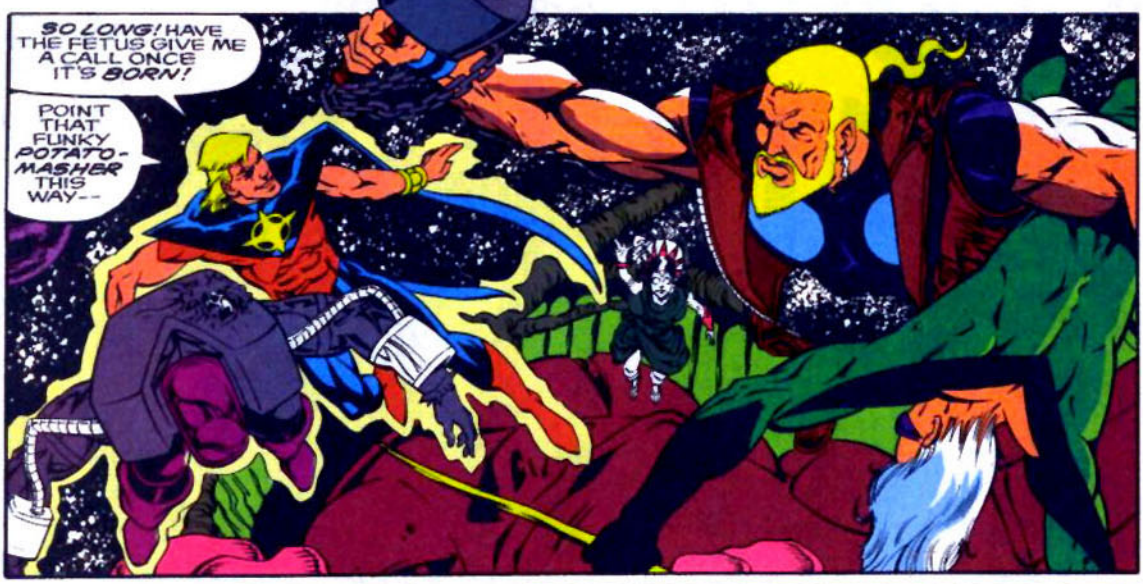
SOMEWHERE IN THE KREE GALAXY, A CONVOCATION OF POWERFUL BEINGS HAVE GATHERED AT THE INCUBATION SITE OF AN AS-YET-UNBORN COSMIC ENTITY KNOWN AS ORIGIN...
FIVE OF THEM ARE ELDERS OF THE UNIVERSE, ANCIENT BEINGS OF VARIOUS SPECIES WHO HAVE DEDICATED THEIR IMMORTAL LIVES TO SINGULAR PURSUITS:
THE POSSESSOR, SEEKER OF POWER THROUGH KNOWLEDGE, CURRENTLY INSENSATE...
THE CAREGIVER, NURTURER OF FRAGILE LIVING THINGS...
THE JUDICATOR, CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE COSMOS...
TWO OF THEM ARE BEINGS OF EARTH:
QUASAR, WHO HAS JUST CLAIMED HIS TWIN ENERGY-TRANSFORMERS FROM ORIGIN...*
RUNE WITH A VIEW!

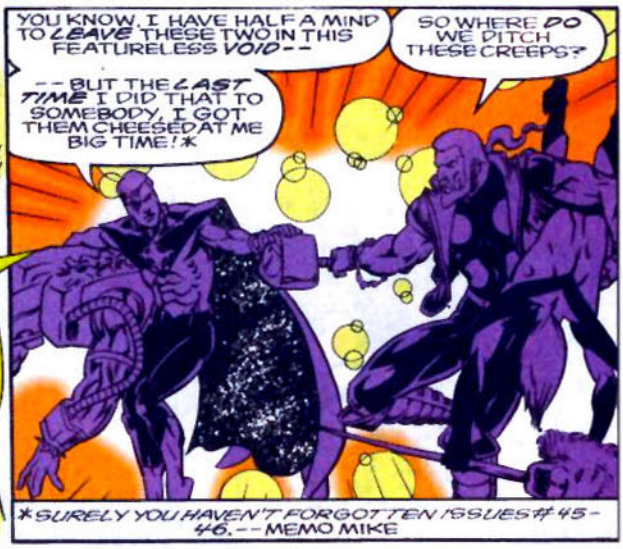

THE EXPLORER, TRAILBLAZER INTO THE UNKNOWN...
...AND THE OBLITERATOR, DESTROYER OF LESSER BEINGS, NOW ALSO INSENSATE...
AND FINALLY, THERE IS THE SELF-STYLED CONTEMPLATOR, WHO HAS JUST FORFEITED HIS ARM IN A FAILED ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE QUANTUM-BANDS...
...AND THUNDERSTRIKE, QUASAR'S FELLOW AVENGER AND ALL-AROUND NICE GUY...
*CHECK OUT LAST ISSUE IF YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW SHE GOT 'EM. --CAPTION-WEARY MIKE


AHEM. IF YOU'RE QUITE FINISHED WITH THE FIREWORKS--
SORRY, ERIC. I GOT A BIT CARRIED AWAY.
--ANY REASON WHY WE CAN'T HEAD BACK HOME?
NOPE.
YOU SOUGHT TO POSSESS WHAT IS NOT RIGHTFULLY YOURS. THIS IS MOST UNCHARACTERISTIC OF THE ENLIGHTENED TATH'KI I REMEMBER.
STICK THAT FINGER SOMEWHERE ELSE.
THIS ISN'T THE CONTEMPLATOR, MA'AM. I MET THE REAL ONE AND HE MENTIONED THAT SOMEONE WAS GOING AROUND IMITATING HIM!
CAN THESE CHARGES BE TRUE?
UH... NO!
JUSTICE IS NOT BLIND!
STAND REVEALED, IMPOSTER!
SO! A SHAPE-SHIFTING SKRULL!
WHAT OF IT?
SKRULL, YOU STAND ACCUSED OF IMPERSONATING AN ELDER! I HAVE SUPREME AUTHORITY OVER MY FELLOW ELDERS AND ALL THOSE WHO ENTER INTO A DISPUTE WITH THEM!
WE SHALL GO SEEK THE TRUE CONTEMPLATOR TO PRESS CHARGES AGAINST YOU AND THEN YOU SHALL BE TRIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COSMIC LAW!


BUT, WAIT-- I DON'T--
IT APPEARS, ALAS, THAT THERE IS NOTHING NEW TO BE EXPLORED HERE.
I GO, TOO.
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYTHING'S WRAPPED UP. SHALL WE SHOVE OFF?
I DON'T SEE WHY NOT. I'M AS HOT TO GET BACK TO MY FRIENDS AS YOU ARE.
PLEASE, DO ME A FAVOR.
REMOVE THE TWO UNCONSCIOUS ELDERS WHO YET REMAIN.
THEIR MERCURIAL NATURES MAY PROVE INJURIOUS TO THE UNBORN.
YOU GOT IT, CARETAKER.
GOTCHA.
ERIC, YOU GRAB THE POSSESSOR--
--I'LL GET THE OBLITERATOR.


SO LONG! HAVE THE FETUS GIVE ME A CALL ONCE IT'S BORN!
POINT THAT FUNKY POTATO-MASHER THIS WAY--

--SO WE DON'T GET SEPARATED IN TRANSIT!
YOUR NEXT STOP... THE QUANTUM-ZONE!
YOU MAKE THAT UP YOURSELF?


YOU KNOW, I HAVE HALF A MIND TO LEAVE THESE TWO IN THIS FEATURELESS VOID--
--BUT THE LAST TIME I DID THAT TO SOMEBODY, I GOT THEM CHEESED AT ME BIG TIME!*
SO WHERE DO WE PITCH THESE CREEPS?
*SURELY YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ISSUES #45-46.--MEMO MIKE

RIGHT HERE. WE'RE SOMEWHERE IN INTERGALACTIC SPACE... BETWEEN THE MILKY WAY GALAXY AND THE GREATER MAGELLANIC CLOUD, IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW.
ALL PASSENGERS OFF!
WHY DO I STILL SEE THESE GUYS MAKING IT BACK TO EARTH SOME DAY WITH A MAJOR MAD ON?
JUST A PESSIMIST, I GUESS.

OKAY, MISTER MACE, NEXT AND *FINAL* STOP: EARTH!

WH--ERIC?

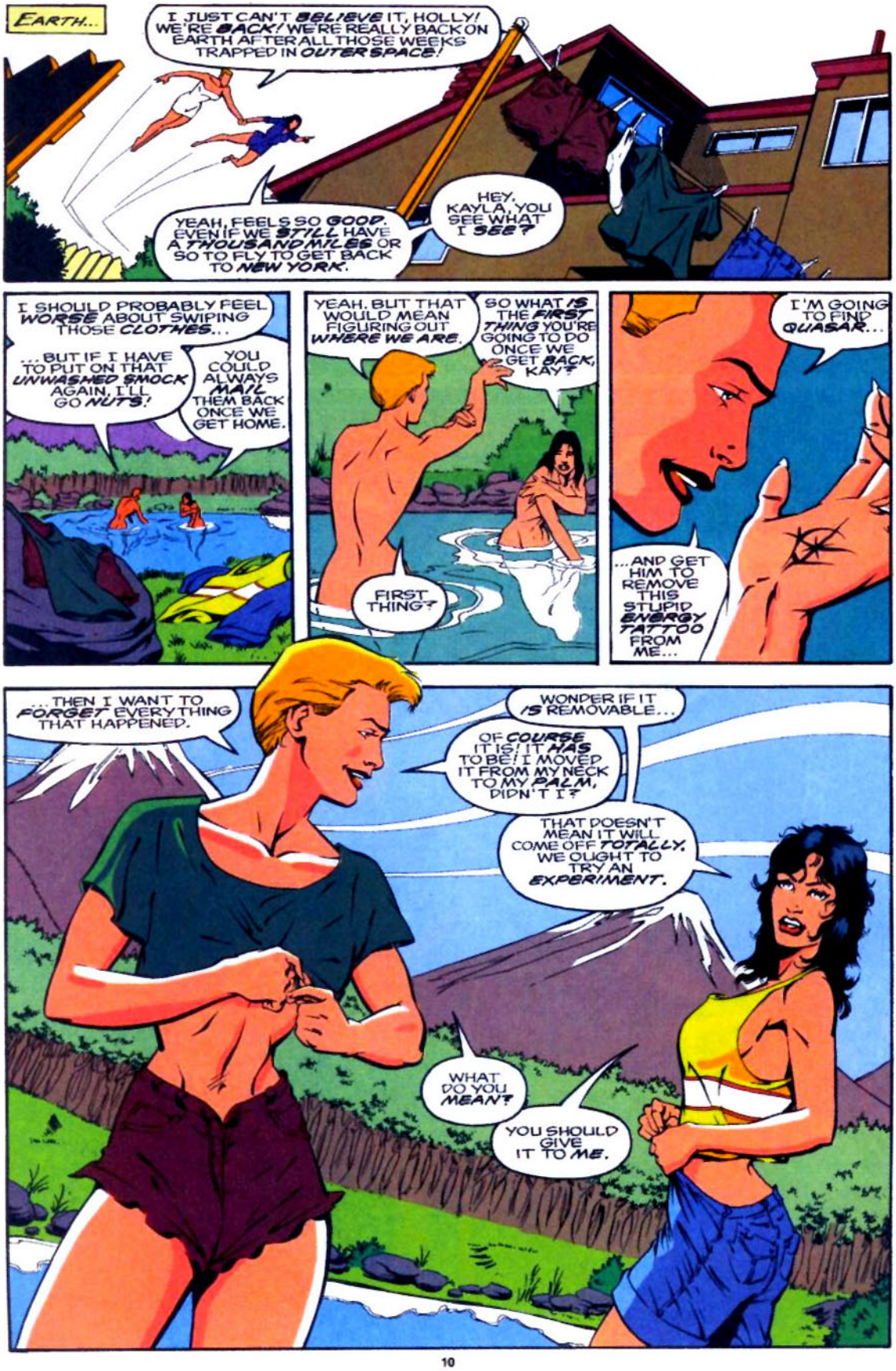
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*?

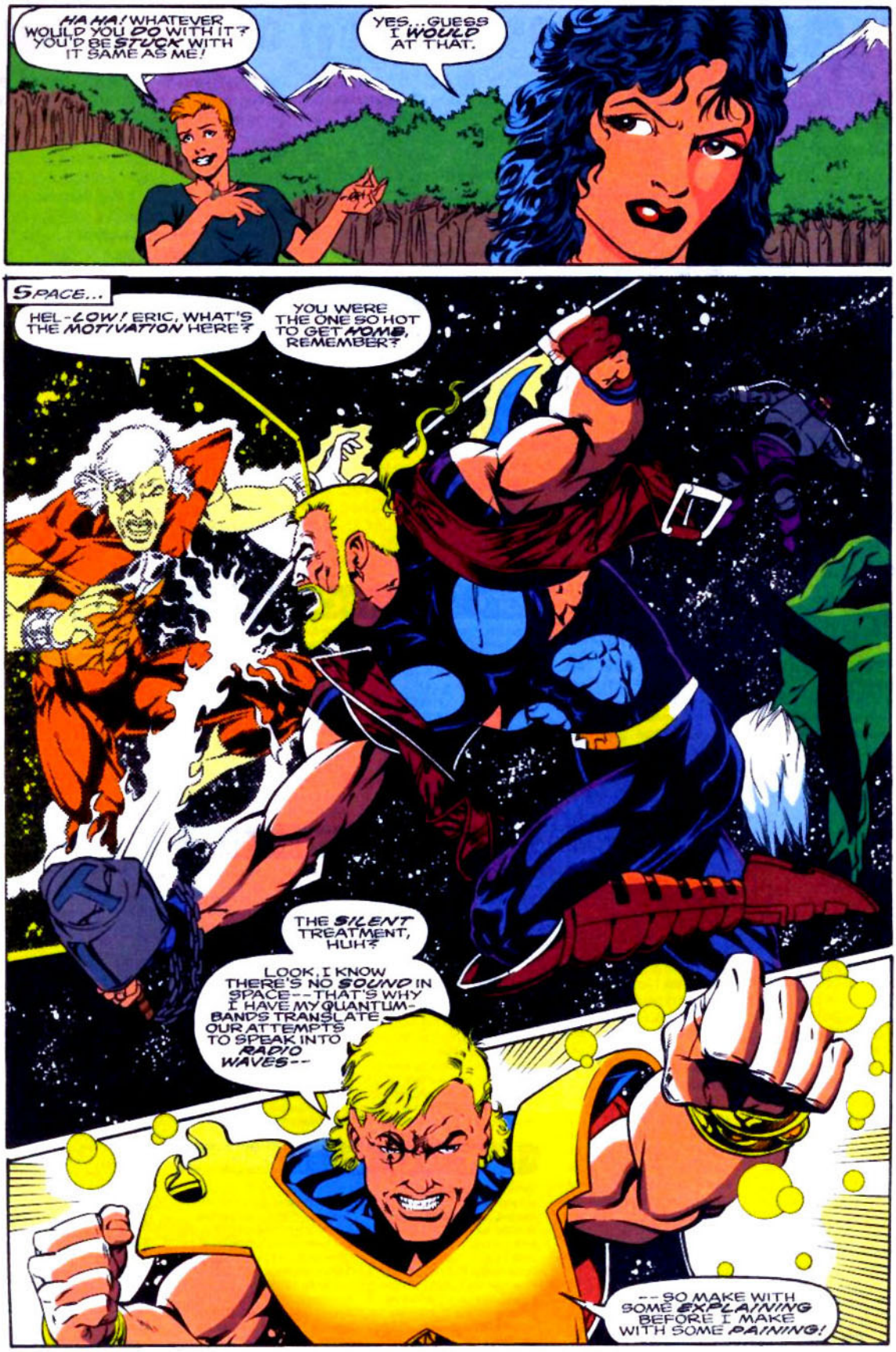
THE POSSESSOR WAS *ALREADY* UNCONSCIOUS, WASN'T HE?

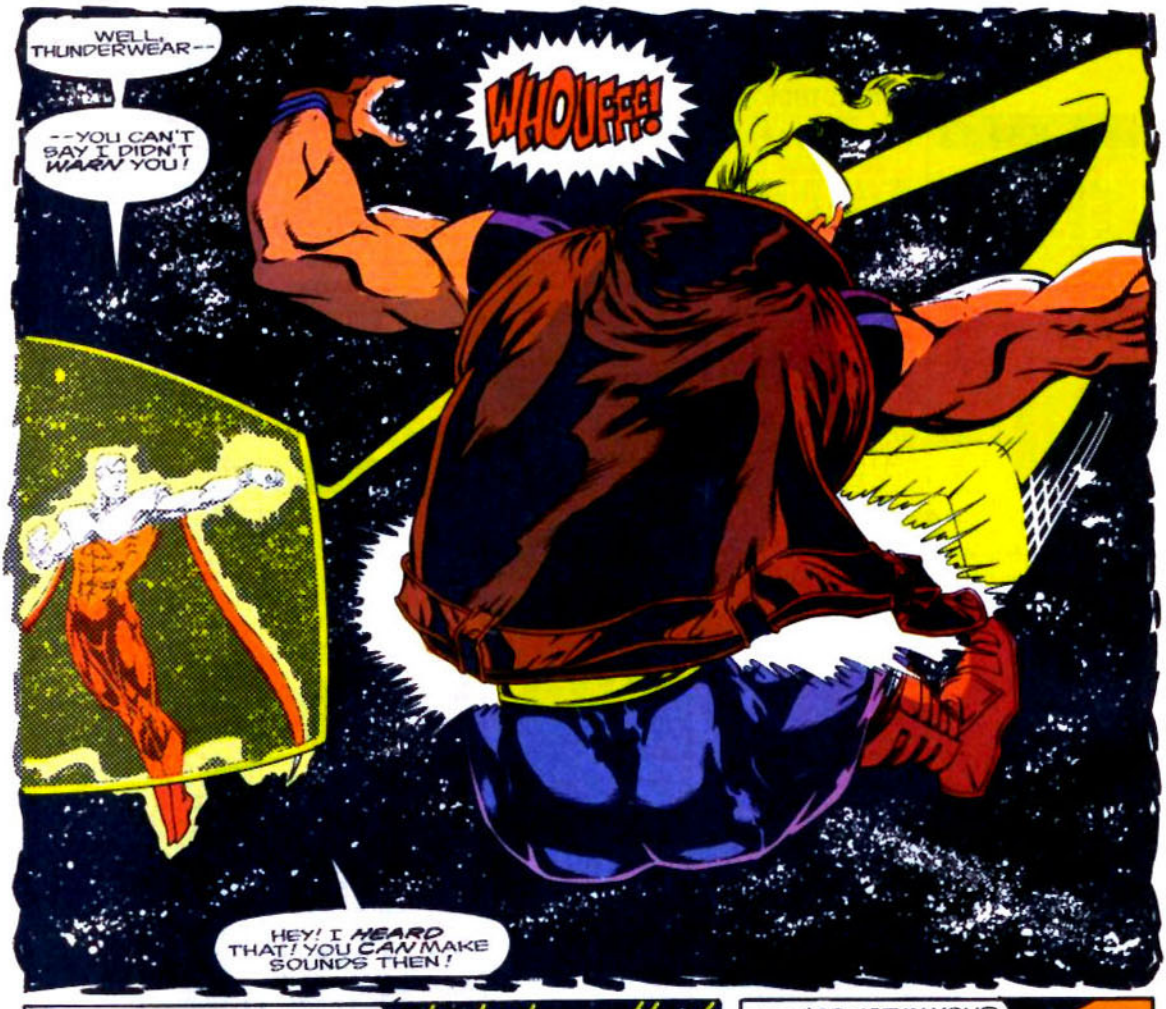
UH...ERIC?

EYAAAAH!

WHAT'S GOTTEN *INTO* HIM?

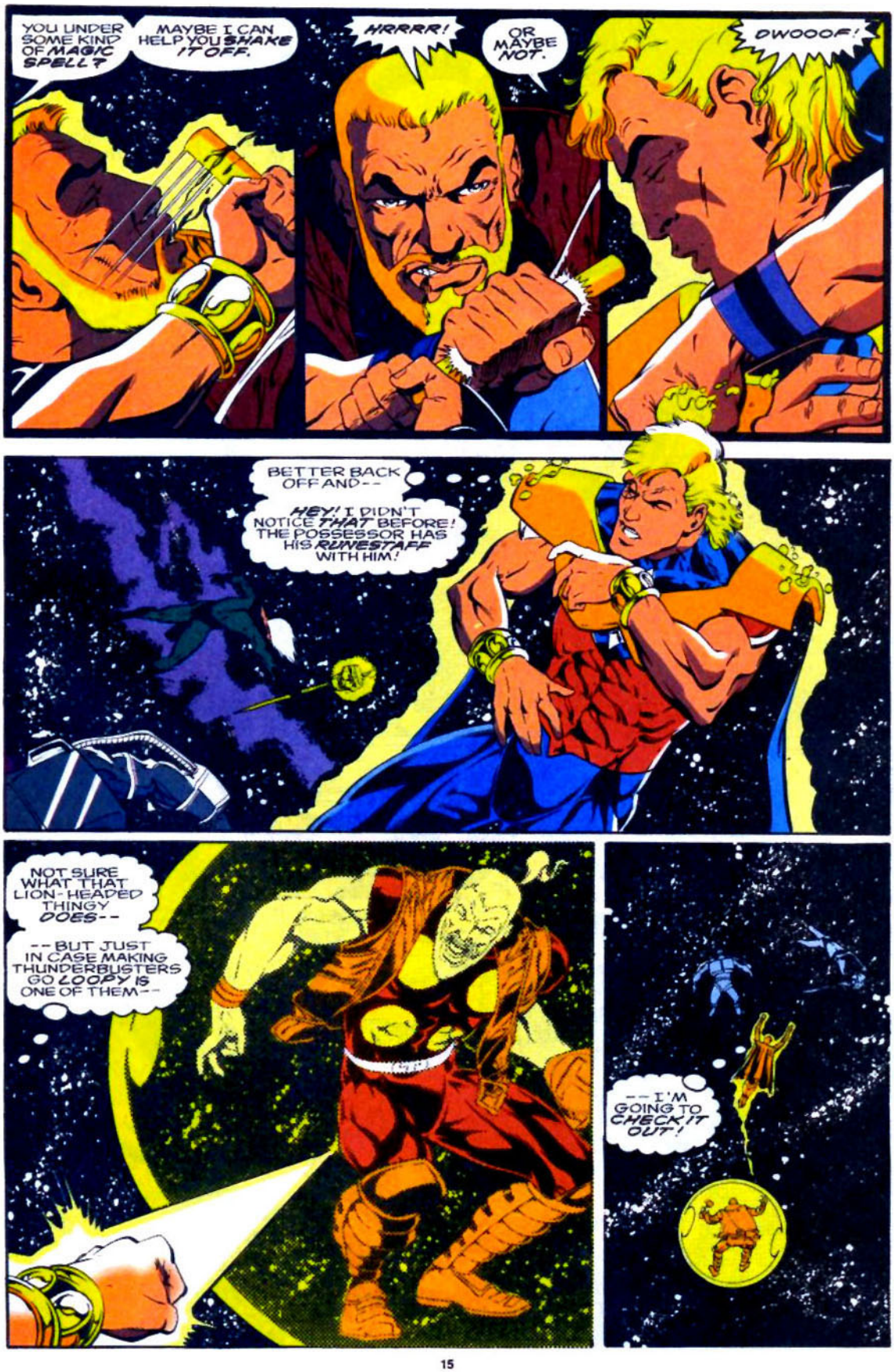

EARTH...
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT, HOLLY! WE'RE BACK! WE'RE REALLY BACK ON EARTH AFTER ALL THOSE WEEKS TRAPPED IN OUTER SPACE!
HEY, KAYLA, YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?
YEAH, FEELS SO GOOD. EVEN IF WE STILL HAVE A THOUSAND MILES OR SO TO FLY TO GET BACK TO NEW YORK.
I SHOULD PROBABLY FEEL WORSE ABOUT SWIPING THOSE CLOTHES...
...BUT IF I HAVE TO PUT ON THAT UNWASHED SMOCK AGAIN, I'LL GO NUTS!
YOU COULD ALWAYS MAIL THEM BACK ONCE WE GET HOME.
YEAH, BUT THAT WOULD MEAN FIGURING OUT WHERE WE ARE.
SO WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO ONCE WE GET BACK, KAY?
FIRST THING?
I'M GOING TO FIND QUASAR...
...AND GET HIM TO REMOVE THIS STUPID ENERGY TATTOO FROM ME...
...THEN I WANT TO FORGET EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED.
WONDER IF IT IS REMOVABLE...
OF COURSE IT IS! IT HAS TO BE! I MOVED IT FROM MY NECK TO MY PALM, DIDN'T I?
THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT WILL COME OFF TOTALLY. WE OUGHT TO TRY AN EXPERIMENT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU SHOULD GIVE IT TO ME.

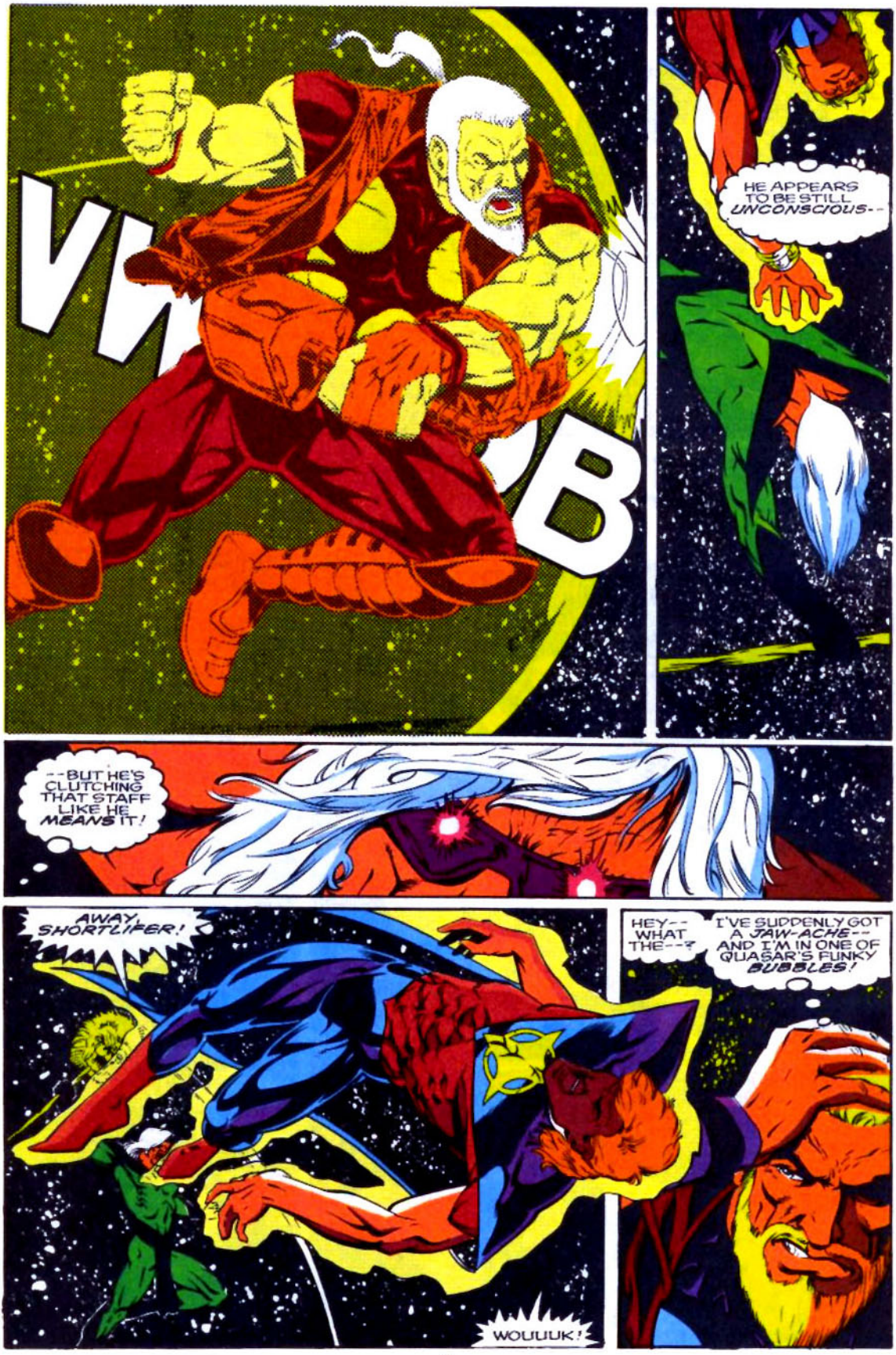

HA HA! WHATEVER WOULD YOU DO WITH IT? YOU'D BE STUCK WITH IT SAME AS ME!
YES...GUESS I WOULD AT THAT.
SPACE...
HEL-LOW! ERIC, WHAT'S THE MOTIVATION HERE?
YOU WERE THE ONE SO HOT TO GET MOMB, REMEMBER?
THE SILENT TREATMENT, HUH?
LOOK, I KNOW THERE'S NO SOUND IN SPACE--THAT'S WHY I HAVE MY QUANTUM-BAND'S TRANSLATE OUR ATTEMPTS TO SPEAK INTO RADIO WAVES--
--SO MAKE WITH SOME EXPLAINING BEFORE I MAKE WITH SOME PAINING!


WELL, THUNDERWEAR--
--YOU CAN'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU!
WHOUFF!
HEY! I HEARD THAT! YOU CAN MAKE SOUNDS THEN!

WHAT CAN THIS BE ABOUT? HE'S NOT ACTING LIKE HIMSELF AT ALL.
MUST BE SOME KIND OF MIND CONTROL. BUT WHOSE?
FUNNY...THE FIRST TIME WE FOUGHT I WAS THE ONE UNDER MIND CONTROL, THANKS TO THE MAGIC OF THE ENCHANTRESS.*
*IN THE SEMI-CLASSIC THOR #437.--DEMI-MIKE

YOU'RE NOT IN YOUR RIGHT MIND, ERIC. SO TELL ME...WHOSE MIND ARE YOU IN?
NNNNH!


YOU UNDER SOME KIND OF MAGIC SPELL?
MAYBE I CAN HELP YOU SHAKE IT OFF.
HRRRR!
OR MAYBE NOT.
OWOOOF!
BETTER BACK OFF AND--
HEY! I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT BEFORE! THE POSSESSOR HAS HIS RUNESTAFF WITH HIM!
NOT SURE WHAT THAT LION-HEADED THINGY DOES--
--BUT JUST IN CASE MAKING THUNDERBUSTERS GO LOOPY IS ONE OF THEM--
--I'M GOING TO CHECK IT OUT!

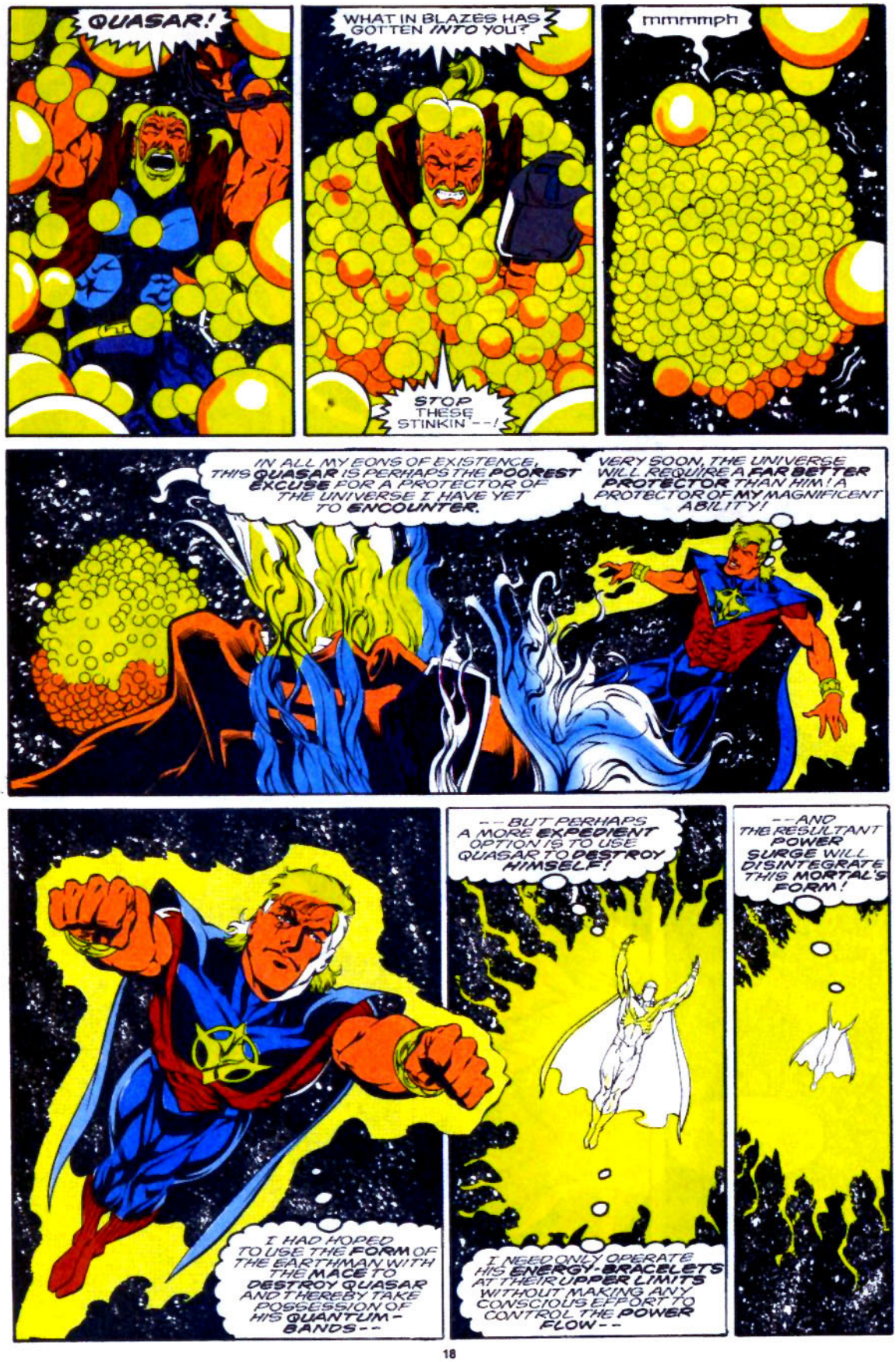

HE APPEARS TO BE STILL *UNCONSCIOUS*--
--BUT HE'S CLUTCHING THAT STAFF LIKE HE *MEANS* IT!
AWAY, SHORTLIFER!
HEY-- WHAT THE--?
I'VE SUDDENLY GOT A *JAW-ACHE*-- AND I'M IN ONE OF QUASAR'S FUNKY *BUBBLES!*
WOUUUK!

I THINK I'VE BEEN MESSED WITH ROYALLY--
--AND IT ENDS HERE!

ADMIT IT, POSS, YOU DID SOMETHING TO--
--HEY!

HE JUST WENT LIMP AGAIN--
--IS POSSY PLAYING POSSUM AGAIN OR--

AHA! I'M IN!


QUASAR!
WHAT IN BLAZES HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU?
STOP THESE STINKIN'--!
mmmmph
IN ALL MY EONS OF EXISTENCE, THIS QUASAR IS PERHAPS THE POOREST EXCUSE FOR A PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE I HAVE YET TO ENCOUNTER.
VERY SOON, THE UNIVERSE WILL REQUIRE A FAR BETTER PROTECTOR THAN HIM! A PROTECTOR OF MY MAGNIFICENT ABILITY!
I HAD HOPED TO USE THE FORM OF THE EARTHMAN WITH THE MACE TO DESTROY QUASAR AND THEREBY TAKE POSSESSION OF HIS QUANTUM-BANDS--
--BUT PERHAPS A MORE EXPEDIENT OPTION IS TO USE QUASAR TO DESTROY HIMSELF!
I NEED ONLY OPERATE HIS ENERGY-BRACELETS AT THEIR UPPER LIMITS WITHOUT MAKING ANY CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO CONTROL THE POWER FLOW--
--AND THE RESULTANT POWER SURGE WILL DISINTEGRATE THIS MORTAL'S FORM!

MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH...
KAYLA! STOP HERE!
WHAT?
MAYBE YOU DON'T NEED TO EAT ANYMORE, BUT I'M GOING TO PASS OUT IF I GO ANOTHER SECOND WITHOUT FOOD!
I STILL NEED TO EAT, HOL.
TRUCK 24hr STOP
BUT WE HAVE NO MONEY! HOW WILL WE PAY FOR OUR MEAL? IT'S BAD ENOUGH WE STOLE THESE CLOTHES--!
DON'T WORRY-- I HAVE AN IDEA. JUST FOLLOW ME.
MMM-MMM!
HUBBA HUBBA!
HI, GUYS. I'M THELMA AND THIS IS LOUISE. ANY OF YOU THE BETTING TYPE?
'CAUSE I'M WILLING TO BET YOU THE PRICE OF TWO FREE MEALS THAT MY FRIEND LOUISE HERE CAN BEAT ANY MAN IN THE HOUSE IN ARM WRESTLING!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, LOUISE?
UH... YEAH.
LEMME GET THIS STRAIGHT-- THAT SCRAWNY CHICK WITH THE OVERGROWN SINEAD HAIRCUT IS AN ARM WRESTLER?!?
THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT DO WE GET IF WE WIN?
UM... WHATEVER YOU ASK FOR... FROM BOTH OF US.
HEH. OKAY, I'M GAME.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO *DO*? I DON'T HAVE *SUPER-MUSCLES*, I DON'T THINK!

RELAX. YOU CAN *FLY* PEOPLE. CAN'T YOU? SIT DOWN, GRAB HIS HAND, *FLOAT* HIM IN THE AIR--HE'LL BE SO *FREAKED OUT* YOU CAN *PIN HIM*!

HHHHH! OKAY...

MOVE OVER, I WANNA *WATCH*!

THIS IS GONNA BE OVER IN A *SECOND*!

C'MON, MERLE! SMACK THE *BUTCHWAX* OFF HER!

NO CHEATING NOW!

IF THIS IS SOME KINDA *HUSTLE*, I'M HUSTLIN THE TWO OF YOU TRAMPS *OUTTA HERE* ON YER SKINNY--

LESSEE WHAT YA *GOT*, BABY!

READY...

GO!

EYAAARGH!

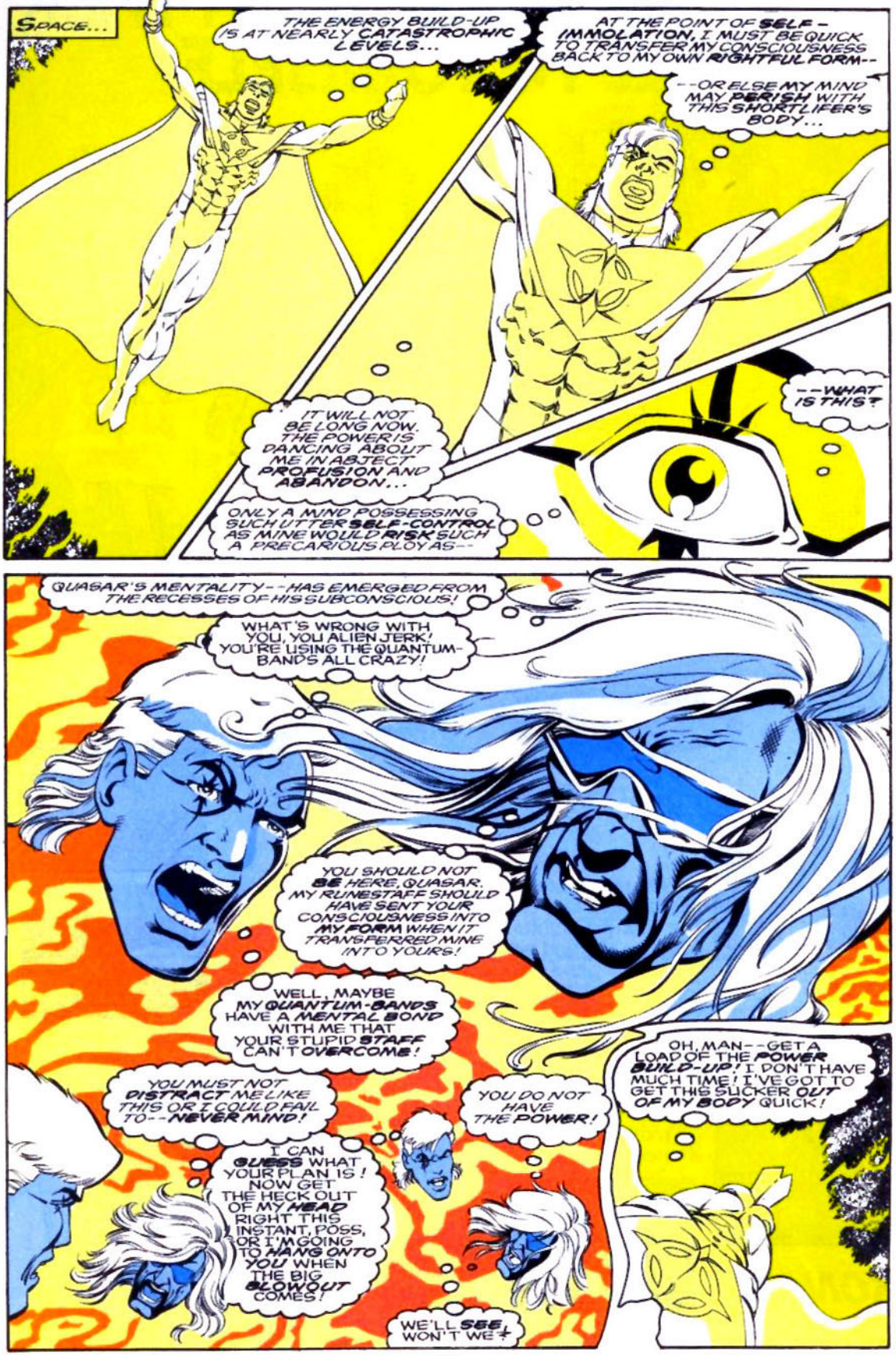
WHAT THE HOLY--?

CUTE TRICK.

WE HAVE OURSELVES A *WINNER*!

WOW, I GUESS I *DO* HAVE SUPER-MUSCLES!

HOW ABOUT A *MENU*?


SPACE...
THE ENERGY BUILD-UP IS AT NEARLY CATASTROPHIC LEVELS...
AT THE POINT OF SELF-IMMOLATION, I MUST BE QUICK TO TRANSFER MY CONSCIOUSNESS BACK TO MY OWN RIGHTFUL FORM--
--OR ELSE MY MIND MAY PERISH WITH THIS SHORTLIFER'S BODY...
--WHAT IS THIS?
IT WILL NOT BE LONG NOW. THE POWER IS DANCING ABOUT ME IN ABJECT PROFUSION AND ABANDON...
ONLY A MIND POSSESSING SUCH UTTER SELF-CONTROL AS MINE WOULD RISK SUCH A PRECARIOUS PLOY AS--
QUASAR'S MENTALITY--HAS EMERGED FROM THE RECESSES OF HIS SUBCONSCIOUS!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, YOU ALIEN JERK! YOU'RE USING THE QUANTUM-BANDS ALL CRAZY!
YOU SHOULD NOT BE HERE, QUASAR. MY RUNESTAFF SHOULD HAVE SENT YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS INTO MY FORM WHEN IT TRANSFERRED MINE INTO YOURS!
WELL, MAYBE MY QUANTUM-BANDS HAVE A MENTAL BOND WITH ME THAT YOUR STUPID STAFF CAN'T OVERCOME!
YOU MUST NOT DISTRACT ME LIKE THIS OR I COULD FAIL TO--NEVER MIND!
I CAN GUESS WHAT YOUR PLAN IS! NOW GET THE HECK OUT OF MY HEAD RIGHT THIS INSTANT, POSS, OR I'M GOING TO HANG ONTO YOU WHEN THE BIG BLOWOUT COMES!
YOU DO NOT HAVE THE POWER!
WE'LL SEE, WON'T WE?
OH, MAN--GET A LOAD OF THE POWER BUILD-UP! I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME! I'VE GOT TO GET THIS SUCKER OUT OF MY BODY QUICK!

WHAT CAN I DO? HIS ANCIENT MIND HAS A *GRIP* ON MY *GREY MATTER*. I CAN'T *BEGIN* TO UNCLENCH IN THE SHORT TIME LEFT!

I FEEL THE *TINIEST REMNANT* OF THE STARBAND LEFT... NO MORE THAN A *MILLIONTH* OF THE ENERGY IT ONCE HAD. BUT IT MAY BE *ENOUGH*!

IF I CAN *CONCENTRATE* ON IT... GET THE POSSESSOR TO *SEE* IT! GOTTA BRING IT *INSIDE* ME--THROUGH MY *EYE*...!

IF ONLY THERE WERE SOME *PHYSICAL* WAY TO FORCE HIM OUT *WITHOUT ADDING* TO THE QUANTUM POWER-SURGE...WAIT! *THERE IS.*

WHAT IS THIS?

THAT IS SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN *NEVER POSSESS*, POSSESSOR!

SOMETHING BEYOND THIS *REALITY*, BEYOND YOUR *KNOWLEDGE*, BEYOND ALL *RECKONING*!

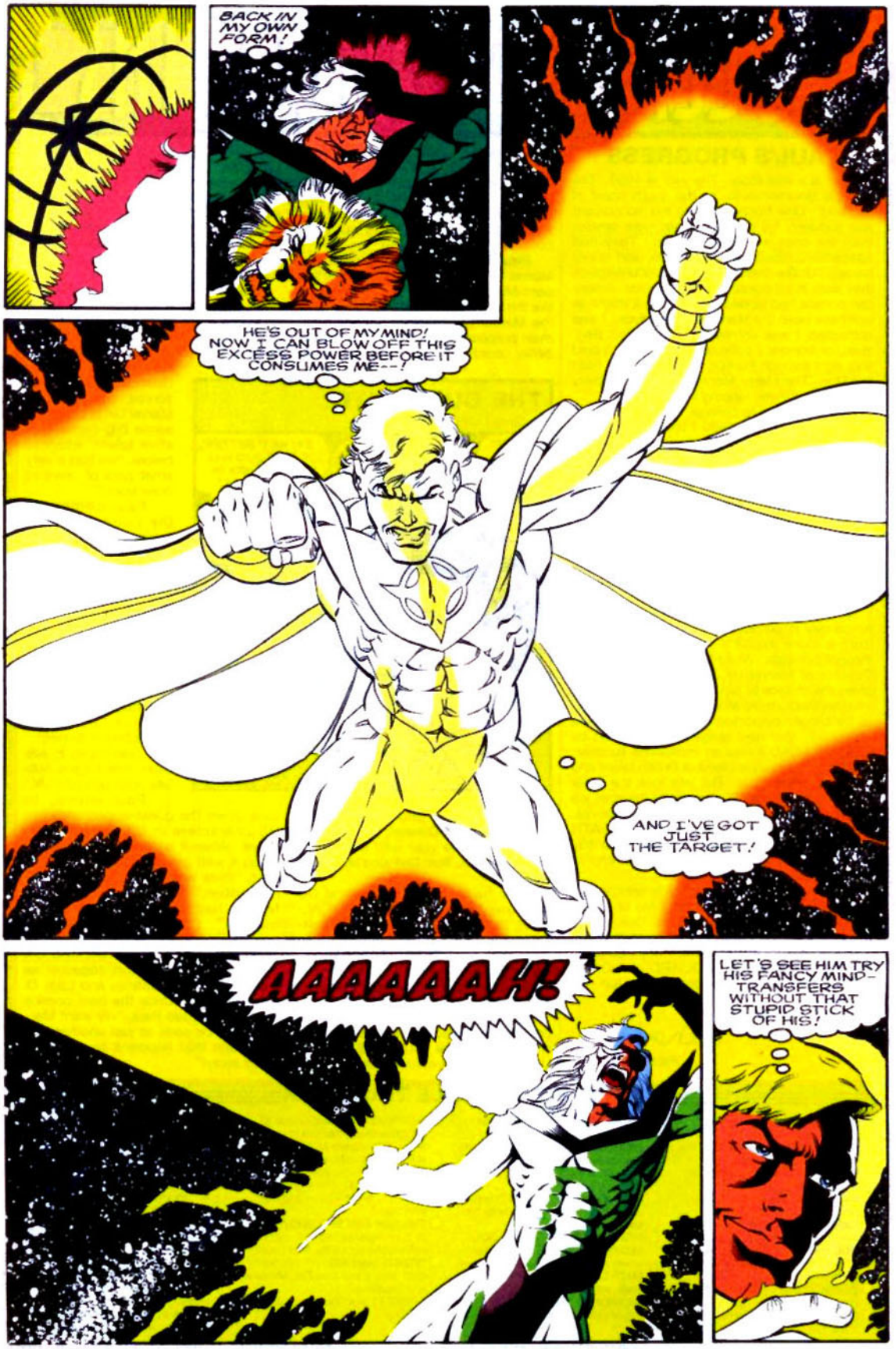
WHERE DID YOU--? GET IT AWAY FROM ME!

UH-UH. I THINK I'M GOING TO HAVE IT *ATTACH ITSELF* TO YOUR *CONSCIOUSNESS*--BLOW IT TO *BITS*!

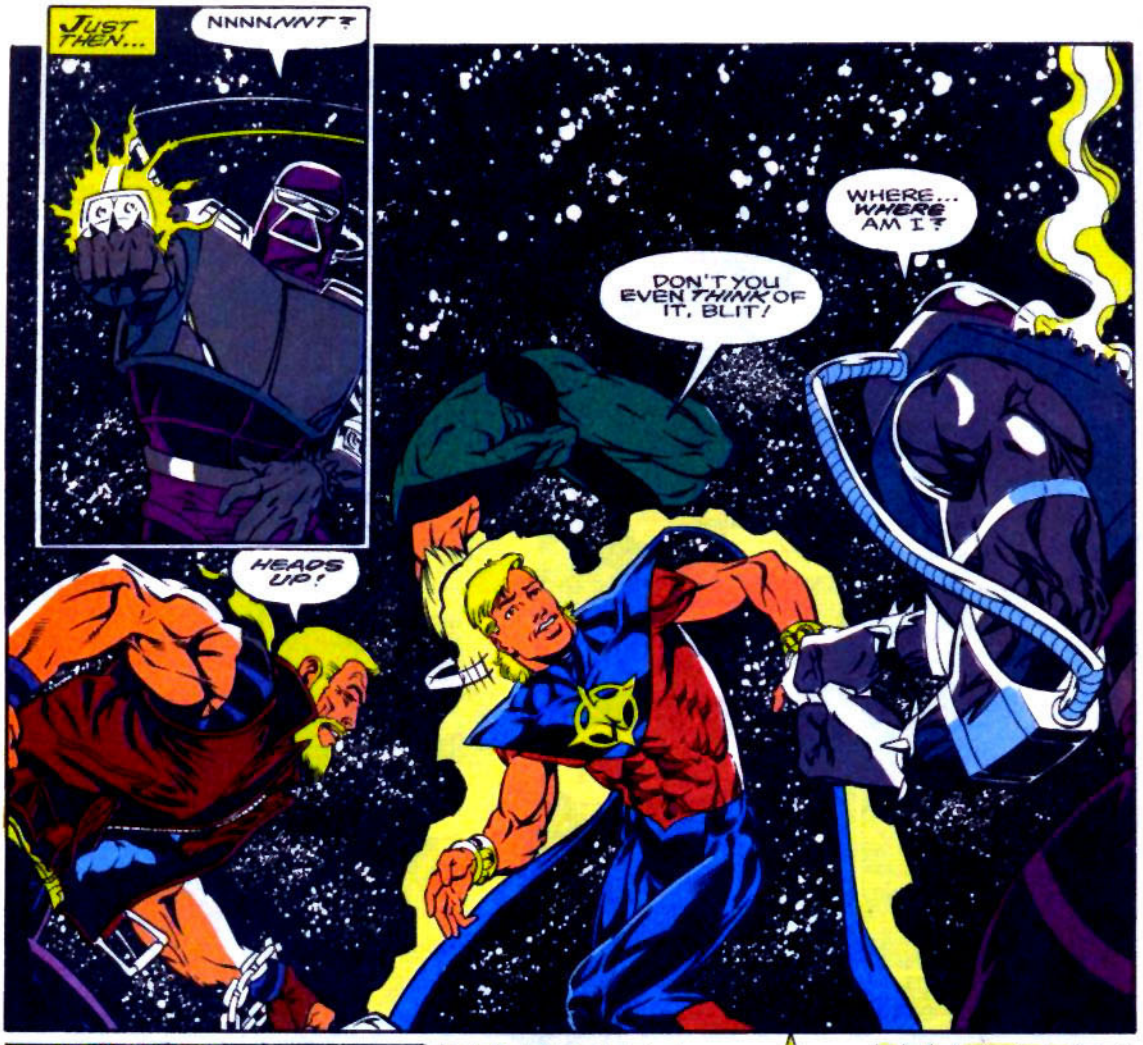
GET OUT OF MY *MIND* AND *BODY* THIS INSTANT, GASBAG, OR I'M GOING TO PUT YOU *OUT OF MY MISERY*!

TAKE IT AWAY! I DO NOT HAVE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT SOMETHING AS UNFATHOMABLE AS THIS--!

NOOO--!

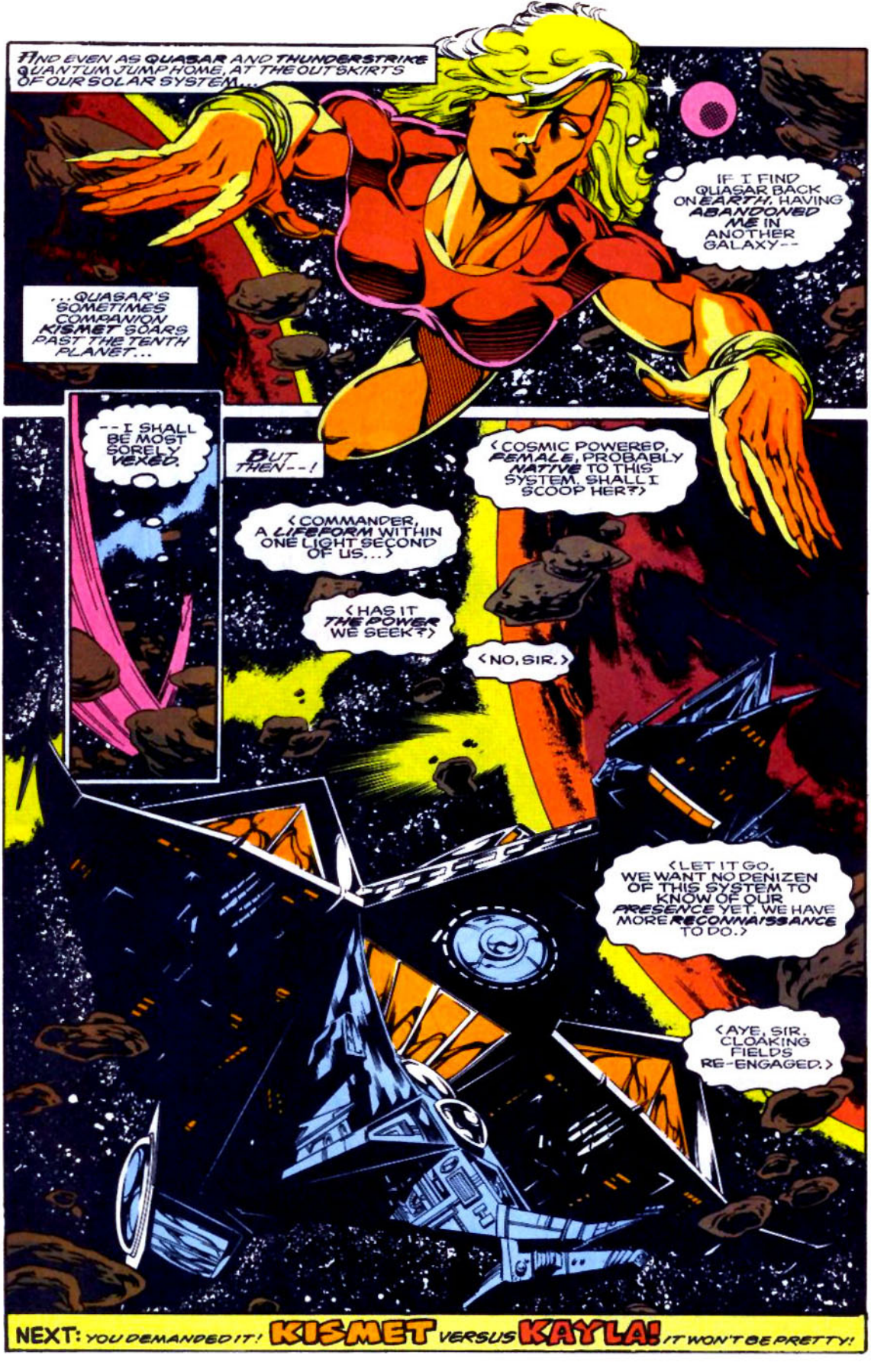

BACK IN MY OWN FORM!
HE'S OUT OF MY MIND! NOW I CAN BLOW OFF THIS EXCESS POWER BEFORE IT CONSUMES ME--!
AND I'VE GOT JUST THE TARGET!
AAAAAAH!
LET'S SEE HIM TRY HIS FANCY MIND-TRANSFERS WITHOUT THAT STUPID STICK OF HIS!

NOW THEN... WHERE'S ERIC?
WHOOPS. I'LL BET I DID THAT, THANKS TO THE POSSESSOR.
SORRY ABOUT THAT, PAL.
WHOA! THE POSSESSOR'S ARM--!
HEY, IF YOU'D HAVE LET GO OF THAT THING, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE LOST YOUR ARM!
I CARE NOTHING FOR A LIMB. IT'S EASY TO REGENERATE! WHAT I CARE ABOUT IS MY RUNESTAFF!
YOU DESTROYED IT COMPLETELY! AND WITHOUT MY MOST PRICELESS POSSESSION, I CANNOT POSSESS ANYTHING!
I'M HAVING DIFFICULTY FEELING SORRY FOR YOU.
OKAY, QUAZE-- YOU HAVE ONE SECOND TO EXPLAIN WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA--!
THE POSSESSOR THERE WAS TAKING OVER OUR HEADS, PITTING US AGAINST ONE ANOTHER...
DON'T WORRY. HE WON'T BE PULLING THAT TRICK ANYMORE.


JUST THEN...
NNNNNNT?
WHERE... WHERE AM I?
DON'T YOU EVEN THINK OF IT, BLIT!
HEADS UP!

DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I'VE LOST ALL RESPECT FOR MY ELDERS.
LET'S BLOW THIS POP STAND.
I HEAR YOU!

POSSESSOR? WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON? LAST I REMEMBER--
OH, SHUT UP!


AND EVEN AS QUASAR AND THUNDERSTRIKE QUANTUM JUMP HOME, AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM...
IF I FIND QUASAR BACK ON EARTH, HAVING ABANDONED ME IN ANOTHER GALAXY--
...QUASAR'S SOMETIMES COMPANION KISMET SOARS PAST THE TENTH PLANET...
--I SHALL BE MOST SORELY VEXED.
BUT THEN--!
<COSMIC POWERED, FEMALE, PROBABLY NATIVE TO THIS SYSTEM. SHALL I SCOOP HER?>
<COMMANDER, A LIFEFORM WITHIN ONE LIGHT SECOND OF US...>
<HAS IT THE POWER WE SEEK?>
<NO, SIR.>
<LET IT GO. WE WANT NO DENIZEN OF THIS SYSTEM TO KNOW OF OUR PRESENCE YET. WE HAVE MORE RECONNAISSANCE TO DO.>
<AYE, SIR. CLOAKING FIELDS RE-ENGAGED.>
NEXT: YOU DEMANDED IT! KISMET VERSUS KAYLA! IT WON'T BE PRETTY!